

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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P R 020816Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5741
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 3417/01

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, CH, JA
SUBJECT: DOMESTIC MOOD BUILDS FOR SINO-JAPANESE PFT

REF: TOKYO 2611

SUMMARY. PRO-SINO-JAPANESE PEACE TREATY MOOD IS
BUILDING HERE, LEADING SOME TO CONCLUDE THAT SIGNING IS IMPENDING.
FUKUDA REMAINS CAUTIOUS, HOWEVER, DUE IN PART, WE BELIEVE,
TO UNCERTAINTY ABOUT US ATTITUDE TOWARD TREATY. WE WOULD
NOT BE SURPRISED IF HE RAISED MATTER WITH PRESIDENT AT MAY
SUMMIT AND, IN MEANTIME, SIMPLY DID MINIMUM NECESSARY TO
AVOID CHARGES OF FOOT-DRAGGING. END SUMMARY.

2. A MOOD FAVORABLE TO EARLY SIGNING OF SINO-JAPANESE PEACE
AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY (PFT) HAS BEEN BUILDING OVER PAST FEW
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WEEKS. OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE PUSHED HARD FOR PFT
PROGRESS IN DIET, AND SIGNING OF SINO-JAPANESE LONG-
TERM TRADE AGREEMENT FEB. 16, ACCOMPANIED BY JAPANESE
BUSINESS LEADERS' STATEMENTS FAVORING EARLY PFT SIGNING,
HAVE ADDED TO MOOD. LDP DIET MEMBERS' GROUPS FAVORING
PFT HAVE MET FREQUENTLY TO URGE FASTER PROGRESS; FONMIN
SONODA MAKES POSITIVE PFT NOISES ALMOST DAILY; FONMIN

SONODA MAKES POSITIVE PFT NOISES ALMOST DAILY; AND THERE IS WIDESPREAD SPECULATION, WHICH HE ENCOURAGES, THAT HE WILL VISIT PEKING SOON. (FORMER FONMIN ZENTARO KOSAKA, FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, TOLD EMBOFF THAT SONODA WOULD TRAVEL MARCH 19-21.)

2. MEDIA HAS GIVEN ALL THIS FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT, LEADING SOME TO CONCLUDE THAT PFT SIGNING MAY BE IN OFFING. FORMER LABOR MINISTER ISHIDA, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD EMBOFFS HE THOUGHT DIET WOULD RATIFY PFT IN CURRENT SESSION ENDING MAY 17. SOMEWHAT MORE CAUTIOUS, KOSAKA AND SEIGO HAMANO, HEAD OF SINO-JAPANESE DIETMEN'S FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE, PREDICTED TO EMBOFF THAT SIGNING WOULD OCCUR IN NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE, WITH HAMANO ADDING "PERHAPS AS EARLY AS JUNE."

3. MOUNTING MOOD REFLECTS, IN PART, LESSENING OF SEVERAL DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS ON SIGNING. MOST POTENT OPPOSITION TO PFT HAD COME FROM LDP PARTY ELDERS AND PARTY'S PRO-TAIWAN RIGHT-WING, PRIMIN FUKUDA'S MAIN SUPPORT BASE. AS RESULT OF CONSULTATIONS OVER PAST FIVE MONTHS, HOWEVER, ONLY ONE PARTY ELDER, FORMER LDP EXECUTIVE BOARD CHAIRMAN HIROKICHI NADAO, REMAINS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO PFT, AND OPPOSITION WITHIN PARTY RIGHT WING HAS BEEN REDUCED TO HARD-CORE, WHICH KOSAKA ESTIMATES AT LESS THAN 20 PERCENT OF LDP LOWER HOUSE MEMBERSHIP; CONFIDENTIAL

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KNOWLEDGEABLE REPORTERS PUT FIGURE EVEN LOWER. LDP LOWER HOUSE MEMBER (AND CHINA SPECIALIST) KOICHI KATO ALSO POINTED OUT TO EMBOFF THAT ICHIRO NAKAGAWA, HEAD OF SEIRANKAI, WHICH VEHEMENTLY OPPOSES MOVEMENT TOWARD PRC, NOW SERVES IN CABINET AND CANNOT PUBLICLY OPPOSE GOJ POLICY.

4. LDP LOWER HOUSE MEMBER MASAYUKI FUJIO, WHO SHARES COMPLETELY NADAO'S FIRM OPPOSITION TO PFT, TOLD EMBOFF POINTEDLY THAT PFT HAD YET TO BE DISCUSSED AND APPROVED FORMALLY BY LDP, IMPLYING IT MIGHT BE TIED UP BY PARTY DECISION-MAKING MACHINERY. THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, CONSIDERING THAT FONMIN SONODA HAS TESTIFIED BEFORE LDP DIPLOMATIC COMMITTEE (CHOSAKAI) TWICE, WITH THIRD MEETING SCHEDULED, A PROCEDURE THAT FREQUENTLY SUBSTITUTES FOR HIGHER-PARTY-LEVEL DELIBERATION OR MAKES IT PERFUNCTORY. IN ADDITION, POLICY AFFAIRS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN ESAKI FAVORS PFT, AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN NAKASONE, ALTHOUGH PUBLICLY CAUTIOUS, PRIVATELY TOLD AMBASSADOR HE EXPECTS EARLY PFT PROGRESS. PROPONENTS OF PFT HAVING OUTNUMBERED OPPONENTS BY MORE THAN TWO-TO-ONE ALL ALONG, VAST MAJORITY OF PARTY NOW CLEARLY

FAVORS PFT.

5. OTHER CONCERNS RAISED BY PFT OPPONENTS ARE ALSO BEING ELIMINATED ONE BY ONE. A FEW MONTHS AGO THERE WAS WORRY ABOUT POSSIBLE ADVERSE MEDIA REACTION. ALTHOUGH ALWAYS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO PFT (WITH EXCEPTION OF CONSERVATIVE SANKEI), PRESS IS NOW CLAMORING FOR EARLY SIGNING. POSSIBLE ADVERSE SOVIET REACTION, TOO, IS BEING SHARPLY DISCOUNTED. FORMER LABOR MINISTER ISHIDA, AMONG THOSE WITH CLOSEST SOVIET TIES IN LDP, TOLD EMBOFF SOVIETS WOULD COMPLAIN, BUT NOT TOO STRENOUSLY. ALL OF THIS HAS LED TO WIDESPREAD CONCLUSION THAT DECISION ON PFT IS NOW CLEARLY UP TO PRIMIN FUKUDA AND, IF HE CHOSE TO GO AHEAD, HE COULD DO SO WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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LITTLE RISK OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL DAMAGE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 3417/02

6. FUKUDA REMAINS CAUTIOUS, HOWEVER, ADJUSTING HIS CAREFULLY CHOSEN LANGUAGE ON PFT MINIMALLY TO TAKE

INTO ACCOUNT INCREASING PRESSURE. FUKUDA DETRACTORS CHALK THIS UP TO INDECISIVENESS OR FUKUDA'S RIGHT-WING LINEAGE, BUT THERE ARE OTHER RASONS TO GO SLOW. UNLESS FUKUDA WISHES TO AVOID PFT CONCLUSION ALTOGETHER, TIME APPEARS TO BE WORKING IN HIS FAVOR. AS PRESSURE BUILDS FOR PFT SIGNING, HE CAN MORE EASILY COPE WITH HARD-CORE LDP AND OTHER OPPONENTS OF PFT. MOREOVER, FUKUDA AIDES, WITH EXCEPTION OF FONMIN SONODA, HAVE APPARENTLY REACHED JUDGMENT THAT THERE IS LITTLE GENERAL ELECTION MILEAGE IN PFT, AND IT COULD CONCEIVABLY BE DIVISIVE IN TERMS OF PARTY UNITY. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, THERE IS ALSO NO HINT OF PRC FLEXIBILITY, WHICH DEPRIVES FUKUDA OF EVEN APPEARANCE OF COMPROMISE.

7. FINALLY THERE IS QUESTION OF US ATTITUDE TOWARD
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PFT. IN QUESTIONS AND ASIDES OF FUKUDA'S CLOSEST ADVISORS, WE CONTINUE TO NOTE OBVIOUS CONCERN ABOUT US VIEWS. THEY WONDER, FOR INSTANCE, IF OUR FAILURE TO NORMALIZE WITH PRC MEANS THAT WE WOULD PREFER JAPANESE TO HOLD BACK. VIEWED DIFFERENTLY, WOULD JAPANESE SIGNING CONTRIBUTE TO UNWANTED PRESSURES ON US TO NORMALIZE? WOULD WE RALLY TO JAPAN'S SUPPORT IN FACE OF CONCEIVABLE SOVIET BLUSTER AND THREATS? TO OUR RESPONSES THAT PFT IS MATTER FOR JAPANESE ALONE TO DECIDE OR EVEN SUGGESTION THAT GOOD SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS (OF WHICH PFT WOULD BE SEEN AS FACTOR) WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO NORTHEAST ASIAN STABILITY, JAPANESE REPLY, "YES WE KNOW, BUT...." LDP OPPONENTS OF PFT CONTINUE TO HARP ON US RESPONSE AND WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF FUKUDA WERE TO RAISE PFT WITH PRESIDENT IN MAY BEFORE MAKING ANY FIRM COMMITMENTS -- EVEN ASSUMING GREATER CHINESE RECEPTIVITY.

8. WE CONCLUDE THAT, ALTHOUGH PRO-PFT MOOD BUILDING AND EARLY PFT PROGRESS CANNOT BE RULED OUT SHOULD CHINESE UNEXPECTEDLY BE MORE FORTHCOMING, MORE LIKELY PROSPECT IS FOR CONTINUING JAPANESE CAUTION OVER NEXT FEW MONTHS.
MANSFIELD

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